

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 13, 2006 has been received and carefully studied.

The Examiner maintains the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Vits, U.S. Patent No. 4,308,984.

By the accompanying amendment, claims 1 and 6 have been amended to clarify the relative location of the primary and secondary discharge slots. Those skilled in the art know that a primary discharge slot is the first slot the web encounters as it travels over the nozzle, and the secondary slot is downstream thereof in the direction of web travel. The claims have been amended to expressly recite this relative location.

The "primary" discharge slot of Vits is slot 3, the first slot the web encounters as it travels over the jet box. Accordingly, Vits fails to disclose or suggest a secondary discharge slot spaced from, stepped down from and downstream of (in the direction of web travel) a primary discharge slot, as now expressly recited in the instant claims. Nor does Vits disclose or suggest a second web support surface downstream of the secondary discharge slot in the direction of web travel, as the surface above

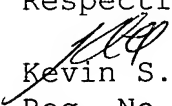
element 3 of Vits is not downstream of a downstream secondary slot.

With particular reference to claim 2, Vits does not disclose or suggest a secondary discharge slot that discharges air parallel to the web. Indeed, column 2, lines 60-64 of Vits expressly state that the propelling medium is ejected in an obliquely angled direction towards the material. An obliquely angled direction is not parallel to the web. Similarly, jet holes 7 and 8 do not eject the propelling medium in a direction parallel to the web.

The remaining claims are believed to be allowable by virtue of their dependence.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing.

Respectfully submitted,


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